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ABSTRACT

The paper describes a program which replaced the "pull out" approach to providing remedial instruction to learning disabled middle school students with a "pull in" program characterized by participation of special education teachers in regular classes to facilitate learning for these students. The special education teachers help to modify the curriculum, assignments, and tests and also work with individuals and small groups in the context of real classroom assignments. The program has been enthusiastically received and expanded each year since its origin in 1985. A typical day's schedule under this approach is described. Potential barriers (e.g., increased time demands for joint planning and the need to resolve differences between teachers) are identified with suggested solutions. Guidelines for implementation include enlisting the support of key players (e.g., principals or supervisors) and recognizing the variety of options available (complementary instruction, team teaching, or development of supportive learning activities). Some recommended practices for the special educator include refraining from judging the classroom teacher, demonstrating effective teaching techniques, and being available as much as possible in every class being helped. Includes 2 references. (DB)

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New Help for the Middle School Student with Learning Disabilities

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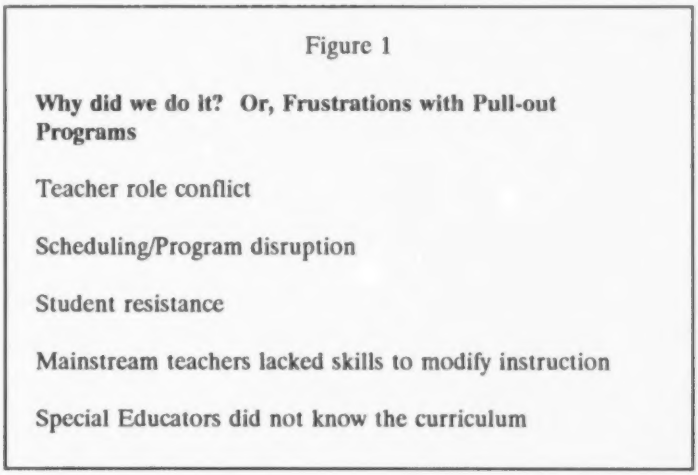
Typically, students with learning disabilities receive services through the "pull-out" model where students leave mainstream classes to go to the special education resource room. These programs are often plagued with role conflict among teachers, program disruption, and student resistance. Both mainstream and special education teachers are unsure who is responsible for developing curriculum or teaching specific skills. When content area teachers are asked to modify materials for students with learning disabilities, these teachers seem to lack the necessary expertise, time, or motivation to be successful with this task. On the other hand, the special education teachers are unsure of the instructional strategies used or the content covered in the mainstream classrooms. Further, scheduling is difficult at best; students missed lessons and assignments regularly, and resource room teachers are frustrated with the limited amount of time allotted to assess, teach, and remediate. Finally, many students who are uncomfortable with the stigma of being pulled out for a session in the special class "forget" their schedule or arrive with disabling resistance.

Figure 1


Why did we do it? Or, Frustrations with Pull-out Programs
Teacher role conflict
Scheduling/Program disruption
Student resistance
Mainstream teachers lacked skills to modify instruction
Special Educators did not know the curriculum

One middle school responded to these frustrations with a novel idea: instead of "pulling-out" the students, "pull-in" the teachers. What began as an experiment in team teaching in 1985 has expanded to a successful mainstream program in the real sense of the word. In the current program, students with learning disabilities are scheduled into mainstream classes in blocks so that their special education teachers can attend their classes. Mainstream teachers continue to be responsible for content-area curriculum and large-group teaching. Special education teachers help to modify the curriculum, assignments, and tests in order to facilitate learning for the students with learning disabilities. These specialists also work with individuals and small groups in the classroom, enabling this teacher to work the students on learning strategies in the context of real classroom assignments. Also, these teachers offer demonstration lessons to model such important teaching concepts as checking for attention, encouraging participation of reluctant students, and individualizing directions.

The success of this program has been impressive. The special education teachers have now become an integral part of a teaching and assisting team. Administrators have sought to expand the program each year. Mainstream teachers who have not been part of the program have requested to participate. After participation, mainstream teachers have been observed to be more effective teachers. Parents have reported that their children have improved attitudes about school, and higher grades have verified this change. And, most important of all, students have declared feeling better about themselves and their success in school than ever before.

Figure 2

A service delivery model where special educators **work together with** regular educators to provide **direct** educational programming to all students **within a general classroom setting.**

Rationale and Benefits

Desirable to increase contact with general ed. students.

Reduce stigma of attending special class

Assists students in transitioning from special ed. to mainstream

Proactive approach to remediation

Can identify difficulties before they become a problem

Both regular and special educators have skills to share

Both regular and special educators can grow from the transaction

Reduces isolation of teachers

A Typical Day (Figure 3)

The "pull-in" program may be explained best by a walk through a typical day with a special education teacher. This particular school day began early to accommodate a special education eligibility committee meeting before classes began. In the meeting, the special education teacher presented her observations from a classroom visit and the results from her educational evaluation. After the committee found the students eligible, this teacher scheduled an appointment with the parent for an Individualized Education

Figure 3

A Day in the Life of a Pull-In Teacher

Before School:
Early meetings like the other teachers and more
Brief planning meeting with 8th grade social studies teacher
- Suggest revision of proposed test
- Developed review/reinforcement activity

First Period: (English)
Before and after instruction
- Stood beside bulletin board with pictures of materials
- Observed class for on-task behavior and helped with last 10 minutes of assignment
- Read to entire class next installment of current novel

Second Period: (Science)
Monitored student organization
- Help teacher to develop a system for notebook checking
- Made mental notes of which students needed help

Third Period: (Social Studies)
Supporting instruction
- Wrote instructions on chalkboard
- Suggested a way to enhance activity with grouping and oral reporting to class

Fourth Period: (Math)
Team Teaching
- Divided class into two groups, both teachers taught
- Not all LD students in lower group

Lunch
Conferencing, answering phone calls, also eating

Fifth Period: (Resource Room)
Called in only students who needed assistance
- Helped with unfinished assignments
- Reminded student of self-monitoring procedures
- Set-up students for homework

Planning:
Testing, scoring, generating IEPs, writing reports, consulting
This time--reading a test to several students

Plan (IEP) meeting. These tasks are part of her early morning responsibilities. Other days, she attended screening committee meetings and, like most teachers, also had to find time for such jobs as bus duty.

Next, there was a short planning session with a mainstream teacher. Several days before, the eighth-grade social studies teacher asked to meet with one of the special education teachers. It seemed that a test was scheduled for the end of the week, and the social studies teacher had some concerns about whether a few students were keeping up. Between the eligibility committee meeting and the arrival of students, the two teachers met to plan strategies. The social studies teacher shared a copy of a proposed test, asking for suggestions. The special education teacher thought that the test needed some reorganization; perhaps the instructions could be simplified and the visual format of the page could be a little more open. This time, the special education teacher only suggested changes; at other times, she had taken the test to retype. That left the matter of the three students who were following behind. The special education teacher listened to the social studies teacher's concerns and suggested a class activity that would allow a small group to meet for a review lesson. They hurriedly agreed as they heard the sounds of students arriving.

The special education teacher walked to the English class and stood just inside the door by the bulletin board. At the beginning of the school year, she had stapled to this board photocopies of the covers of the texts and pictures of required materials, such as notebooks and writing tools. As students entered, she glanced at their stacks of books and reminded them to check the bulletin board if necessary. Several students darted

back to their lockers and returned prepared.

The English teacher taught the lesson while the special education teacher watched to see if any students needed assistance. This class went smoothly for about 30 minutes, but then signs of student restlessness began to build. During the next 10 minutes, the special education teacher walked among her students to help them stay on task in order to finish their work. Since assignments were completed, the agreement was that the last 10 minutes of class were reserved for the next installment of the current novel. The special education teacher read aloud a chapter from the current novel.

As classes changed, the special education teacher headed for a second period science class. "Let's take out our homework," the science teacher directed. Two students with learning disabilities could not find theirs. The special education teacher made a mental note to check the organization of their notebooks later in the resource room. "Bring your science notebooks to my room today," she whispered to these students. In this class, the special education teacher only monitored student progress. After several years of working with the science teacher, a wonderful system of organization and frequent checking had been developed to keep track of handouts, notes, and assignments. This teacher could remember the days when the science teacher checked notebooks every 6 weeks only to find that over that period the students with learning disabilities had lost many things and only partially completed most of the rest.

Third period was social studies. The teacher began to explain that the activity for the day was a review project to be completed in small groups. Quickly, the special education teacher moved to the chalkboard to write instructions for the task; after years

in mainstream classes, she had learned the importance of either modeling the use of visual cues or assisting by actually writing on the board. This teacher quietly suggested to the social studies teacher that the groups might consider reporting their findings orally. This format had worked well for students with learning disabilities in the past. Further, she offered suggestions for grouping students in order to pair some stronger pupils with those falling behind. Then, the special education teacher chose a group that she would assist and another group that she would monitor at a distance. As the activity progressed, this teacher made more mental notes about concepts some students were not grasping. She also noted that several concepts were difficult for all the students, not just the special education pupils. Perhaps she would offer to teach that topic in a short demonstration lesson to the whole class tomorrow.

The bell rang, and the special education teacher proceeded down the hall for the math class. In this room, the students had been divided into two groups for several weeks. The math teacher had been teaching one group while the special education teacher had been instructing the other. These two teachers had used this approach before whenever it became clear that there was a group of students who needed to be taught a special unit or who were not ready to proceed according to the regular curriculum. The special education teacher looked at her group and remarked to herself that only some of her group had learning disabilities; some were regular education students who needed extra help. At the same time, she could find students with learning disabilities among the members of the math teacher's group. The special education teacher used many mnemonics, jingles, and rhythms to teach her lessons. Interestingly,

she had learned most of these from the math teacher--an added benefit of the "pull-in" program.

After math, it was time for lunch. The special education teacher had decided to relax and refrain from contacting teachers or returning telephone messages. However, she was quickly drawn into a professional debate at the lunch table. Then, a return phone call from a parent she had been trying to reach for days sent her scurrying to the office. Maybe she would relax at lunch tomorrow, but tomorrow there would be . . .

During the fifth period, the special education teacher worked with students in the resource room. At this time, most students with learning disabilities were scheduled in other classes such as exploratory courses, band, or remedial reading. Students left these classes to receive help in the resource room once or twice weekly, or in some cases, daily. However, this could change as needed. Typically, six to eight students attended at any one time. The special education teacher checked the science notebooks she had noticed were in need of attention. She had these students complete unfinished work and put papers in their proper sections. Also, during this time the teacher talked briefly to a discouraged student about a class he was failing. After 20 minutes, it was clear that one of the students had not completed many of his tasks. The special education teacher reminded him of the technique they had devised to self-monitor for attention. With a little help, he started to work and began to check off his "on-task" card. As the period drew to a close, the teacher initiated her "preparing for tonight and tomorrow" activities. She asked to see homework assignment pads and assisted students in deciding which texts needed to go home with them. Students were sent to their lockers to check or change

"self-check" lists taped on the inside of their locker doors. Other days, the teacher might decide to prepare students for topics that mainstream teachers would cover tomorrow or remind students of upcoming assignments or impending tests.

The final period of the day had been set aside for planning, but, as most special education teachers know, planning periods are most often used for testing, scoring, or writing IEPs and reports. Today, however, she decided to help administer a test in a mainstream class. The special education teacher collected a small group of struggling students and read the test to them. At times, she had read a test to a student and had written down the answers for him.

The final bell rang. Where had the day gone? Some days were not quite so structured. During several periods, the regular education teachers might say that they did not need support that day. This space allowed the special education teacher time to observe and test newly referred students or reevaluate current students. This pace was hectic, but it was satisfying to see students with their peers, succeeding in ways that made them feel proud.

Potential Barriers--Suggested Solutions

Teachers and administrators who have attempted to implement this type of programs have experienced many potential barrier. Luckily, many of these professionals have surmounted these obstacles creatively.

The first objection many teachers encounter is that collaborative teaching is intrinsically more time consuming than teaching alone. Indeed, working together requires more time to plan and communicate. Successful programs have found that it is essential

Figure 4

Potential Barriers--*Suggested Solutions*

Intrinsically more time consuming--

common planning, schedule release time

Inability for teachers to work cooperatively--

provide training & develop guidelines

Perception of increased workload and expansion of traditional roles--

allow teachers to share concerns as roles develop

Inflexible grading policies--

develop guidelines with administrative and parental support

Teachers don't use test feedback to modify instruction--

train use of CB, graphing, and modification of instruction

to schedule common planning time and arrange for release time. Special education teachers may need to set aside a day each week to meet with teachers during the classroom teacher's planning time. Other professionals have received local, state and federal grants to find substitute teachers in order to free classroom teacher for on-going or long-term planning.

Team teachers have been surprised to find that these situations require skills that were not part of their training, including the ability to negotiate, to assess the emotional needs of co-workers, to advocate for better teaching practice, and to train teachers to use effective teaching practices. In order for cooperative teaching to be successful, teams will need continuous training and supportive consultation from experienced peers and/or

teacher educators.

As teachers in collaborative situations expand their role, they often perceive an increase in workload and responsibility. These teachers need the opportunity to vent their frustrations and explore ways to expedite their many new tasks. It is possible that the new situation is merely different, and the initial reaction is a natural response to change. However, there is also the distinct possibility that some team teachers volunteer (or are assigned) for a disproportionate number of responsibilities. In this case, it is essential that team members remain open to negotiation and attempt to support each other.

When two teachers work together, especially teachers with divergent teaching, they will commonly disagree on a few issues. In particular, grading practices are often debated heatedly. It has been found that guidelines for grading should be addressed at the very beginning. Planning sessions for approaches to grading should include administrators and parents. Attempts should be made to develop clear yet flexible guidelines so that all teachers involved understand how to assign grades and what alternatives exist for grading atypical learners.

Finally, many special educators have found that regular classroom teachers are not alert or responsive to students' daily performance feedback. The special education teacher can assist the classroom teacher by collecting classroom-based assessment data, graphing this data, and modifying instruction in response to trends.

Figure 5

Implementation

Need regular ed and administrative support

Inform parents of new changes

Train teachers in collaboration skills

Be prepared to be a ever-helpful and always flexible

Implementation

When considering the "pull-in" model of mainstreaming, enlist the support of several key players. Find regular educators who are willing to try new things and who are dedicated to the best possible programming for students with learning disorders. Include principals or supervisors in your planning, especially if you have the skill to draw from them a suggestion for collaborative teaching. Elicit support from interested parents, those willing to make phone calls or write letters. Involving all these parties in planning may be cumbersome, but experience shows that the extra investment at the beginning saves more then its share of questions and hassles along the way.

There are many options for regular classroom teachers and special educators to work together. Typically, the regular educator is knowledgeable regarding curriculum and large group instruction. Whereas, special education teachers can: (a) target areas of difficulty in curriculum, (b) analyze tasks, and (c) adapt instruction. However, these are stereotypes and the best programs develop out of a flexibility and respect for skills and strengths of each teacher.

Figure 6

Teacher Roles

Typically, the regular educator is knowledgeable of curriculum and large group instruction. whereas, the special educator targets areas of difficulty in curriculum, analyzes tasks, and adapts instruction.

However, *roles should be based on skills and strengths* not artificially predetermined.

Collaborative teaching may take the form of complementary instruction, team teaching or supportive learning activities. Complementary instruction where the regular education teachers has primary responsibility for the class while the spec. ed. teacher provides learning strategies and survival skills. For example, the regular educator presents the lesson while the special educator sets up the lesson, gives suggestions for taking notes and points out main ideas during a review. This type of instruction could take place simultaneously as the special educator offers assistance during the lesson, or complimentary instruction could take the form of a mini-lesson presented before or after the lesson.

The second option for collaborative teaching is team teaching. Planning jointly, the two teachers divide up the lesson and each teaches a portion of the content or takes responsibility for part of the activity.

The third option involves development of supportive learning activities. The regular classroom teacher is responsible for teaching the content and the special educator

Figure 7

Three Cooperative Teaching Options

Complementary Instruction: Reg. Ed. teacher primarily responsible for class; sp. ed. teacher provides learning strategies and survival skills. For example, regular educator presents the lesson while special educator sets up the lesson, gives suggestions for taking noes, and points out main ideas during a review. Two forms: simultaneous and mini-lesson.

Team Teaching: After joint planning, both teach portions of content.

Supportive Learning Activities: Regular Ed. teacher is responsible for teaching content and special education develops and presents supportive and reinforcement activities.

develops and presents supportive and reinforcement activities. Frequently, this takes the form of a lecture presented by the regular educator followed by a small-group learning or cooperative learning activity. Of course, these three approaches are options, and teams can use any one of the three or adaptations of those that best suit the populations. Ultimately, the success of the program will be based on continuous communication and mutual support.

Suggested Practices

Researchers list many practices that improve mainstreaming efforts such as the use of effective-teaching practices, classroom-based assessment, and regular monitoring of

Figure 8

Suggestions

Use effective teaching practices

Use Classroom-Based Assessment

Keep daily or weekly records of progress

Use graphic organizers

Use cognitive strategies

Make decisions while teaching based on appraisal to adapt instruction

Modify grading practices

Conference regularly

Teach any student who needs help

Special educator in class at least two times/week

Help develop tests and assignment sheets

Be available during test periods

Exchange roles

Don't judge reg. ed. instruction

MELD-- monitor student achievement

plan intervention based on progress

train teachers in alternative reading strategies

progress resulting in adapted instruction. In addition teachers seem to benefit from training in the use of alternative reading strategies, cognitive strategies and study skills. However, several practices in particular have been found to improve significantly the use of collaborative-teaching in mainstreaming. First, special educators are cautioned not to

judge the classroom teacher nor discuss observations of ineffective teaching. On the other hand, it is critical to reinforce good teaching. Second, the special educator should demonstrate effective teaching techniques whenever possible. This includes helping to rewrite tests and assignment sheets, clarifying instructions and simplifying the visual format. It also includes teaching "model lessons" with advanced organizers, notes on the board, checking for understanding, and guided practices. Third, the special educator must be available at least twice each week in every class and as frequently as possible for major exams. Finally, the special education teacher should offer to assist any student who needs help. This practice clearly demonstrates that collaboration is a team effort and that no student "belongs" to any one teacher.

Conclusion

There are many possible reasons for the success of these programs. One explanation is that the special education teachers have been able to observe the problems as they occur, instead of having to find out later or guess where the learning process had broken down. Another reason for success is the modeling of good teaching in mainstream classses. Or perhaps, it is the extra support these teachers provide mainstream teachers when the demands of the classroom seem overwhelming. Certainly, a good measure of the success of the program is due to a superior system of organization and continuous monitoring of progress. And, success generates enthusiasm, which in turn provides the energy required to meet the needs of this challenging population.

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